THE CONTROVERSY, CONCERNING FREE-WILL, AND Predestination,

Set in a *true Light*, and brought to a *short Issue*.

IN A

Letter to a Friend.

WESTMINSTER:

Printed by A. CAMPBELL, for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane*; and sold by the Booksellers of *London* and *Westminster*. 1728. (Price 6 *d.*)

Please to correct the following Errors.

Page 3. { L. 19. read IMAGE.
L. 31. the same,
L. 32. read Omnipotent.

The Controverſy *concerning* Free-Will *and* Predeſtination, *ſet in a* true Light, *and brought to a* ſhort Iſſue.

SIR,

IN Obedience to your Commands, I ſend you my own Sentiments concerning this *Controverſy*; And ſhall not give you the Trouble of the various *Arguments* which have been hotly managed without *Charity*, by thoſe who *diſpute* about it, more like People who *Contend* for *Victory*, than that are *Inqueſt* of *Truth*.

I THEREFORE put it entirely upon this *Iſſue*; *Firſt*, That GOD has moſt undoubtedly, and acknowledgedly, FREEDOM OF WILL. *Secondly*, That *Man*

was *Created* in the IMAGE of GOD and after His LIKENESS.

BUT If any one will be ſo wicked and fooliſh as to deny, That *Freedom of Will* is an *Attribute* of GOD, the great Prophet *Daniel* may be his Inſtructer, iv. 35.--*He doth according to his* WILL, *in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth: And none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto Him, What doſt thou?* See alſo *Job* ix, 1. to 13. And *Iſa.* xlv. 5. to 14. And *Rom.* xii. 2. Where St. *Paul* calls the WILL of GOD PERFECT; which yet it cannot be, unleſs it be FREE. Nor indeed, can He be GOD, if He have not a FREE-WILL: For *Freedom* of *Will* is an *Eſſential Attribute of* GOD; Who, as ſuch, muſt be *Independent.*

AND, That *Man* was *Created* in the IMAGE of GOD, and after His LIKENESS, appears from *Gen.* i. 26. *And GOD ſaid, let Us make Man in Our* IMAGE, *after Our* LIKENESS. 27. *So GOD Created Man in His own* IMAGE; *in the* IMAGE *of GOD Created He him; Male and Female Created He them.*

FROM Theſe *Premiſes*, thus eſtabliſhed, in *Divine Authority*, it follows plainly, directly, and neceſſarily, That *Adam* was *endued* with *Freedom* of *Will*, at his

his *Creation*, else he could not be created in the IMAGE of GOD, and after His LIKENESS: For one *Essential Attribute* of GOD, and consequently of His IMAGE, is *Freedom of Will*. And to enforce this, read *Deut.* xiii. 15, 19. which *Justin Martyr* in his *Apology*, applies to *Adam* before his *Fall*, in the first Instance. See Dr. *Grabe*'s Notes upon it. This Father flourished *Anno Dom.* 140, and in his *Apology* has proved *Free Will* in *Man*, effectually from *Holy Writ*, and by just and strong Reasoning.

BUT *Adam forfeited* and *lost* this IMAGE of GOD, by his *Sin* and *Fall*: And thereby also *forfeited* and *lost* this *Freedom of Will*, which must be an *Essential Attribute* of that IMAGE; else the IMAGE must be *Imperfect*; insomuch that he could then *will* nothing that was *Good*; until the *Divine* IMAGE was *Re-implanted* in him, which it was presently after his *Fall*, by the *Promise* then made of the MESSIAH, who was to *bruise the Head of the Serpent*, *Gen.* iii. 15. compared with St. *John* i. 9. where it is said, that (JESUS CHRIST, the LOGOS, or WORD) *was the true* LIGHT, *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.*

THIS *Re-implanted* IMAGE of GOD, is a *Spark* of His own Omnipotent LIGHT,

the *heavenly Ens*, which GOD is pleaſed in *Love* and *Mercy* to afford *Man*, as an *Earneſt* of the ſtupendiouſly miraculous *Reſtoration* of him, which He has been pleaſed to take upon Himſelf; and for the bringing of which to bear, in due Time, He has pledged His *Faith*. It is the whole *Kingdom* of GOD in *Miniature*; as a *Grain* of *Muſtard-Seed*, which takes *Root downward*, and bears *Fruit upward*; according as *Man Opens* himſelf, like *good Ground*, to *receive* the *Divine Influences*, to the *Baniſhing* of the *Darkneſs*, and the *Increaſe* of the *Divine* LIGHT, by the *Proceſs* of *Regeneration*; until the whole *Extent* of the *Soul* be filled therewith, that is, with GOD Himſelf; for it is no leſs, for all which ſee theſe Texts following, St. *Matth.* xiii. 31. *Acts* iii. 19, 20, 21. St. *John* i. 4, 5, 7. *Eph.* v. 8, 14. *Col.* i. 12 and iii. 10. *Theſſ.* v. 5. 2 *Tim.* i. 10. 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. and iv. 6. 1 *Cor.* xv. 49. *Eph.* iv. 13. And that we muſt have GOD the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST in us, ſee *Eph.* ii. 22. and iv. 6, 13. St. *Matth.* x. 20. St. *John* xiv. 20. *Rom.* viii. 10. 2 *Tim.* i. 14. and many more.

SINCE Then, JESUS CHRIST *lighteth every Man* (without Exception) *that cometh into the World*, by His *Divine* LIGHT, in one Degree or other.

This

This *Divine* LIGHT is the *Re-implanted* IMAGE of GOD in the *Soul* of *Man*; which muſt *Grow* and *Vegitate* by the *Laws* and *Rules* of *Spiritual Vegetation*, in the *Proceſs* of *Regeneration*, by which, at laſt, our *Will* becomes fully *Reſolved* and *Tranſmuted* into the WILL of GOD; When we *come in* (or into) *the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of CHRIST.* *Eph.* iv. 13. Till then, we muſt *fight* manfully under CHRIST's *Banner*, and muſt undergo the *Caſualties* of our *Spiritual Warfare*, by *Temptations*, *Tryals*, &c. before we become *Victorious*; which yet we ſhall in the End be, *if we hold the Beginning of our Confidence ſteadfaſt unto the End*, *Heb.* iii. 14. *If we endure to the End.* St. *Matth.* x. 22. If we are not *deficient* to ourſelves. *Ezek.* xviii. 31. If we make the right Uſe of our *Freedom* of *Will*, even that for which it has been beſtowed upon us, by *Reſigning* it daily more and more to GOD, as JESUS CHRIST did. This *Freedom* of *Will* then, being an *Eſſential Attribute* of GOD, and conſequently of His IMAGE; it is therefore certainly and neceſſarily *Re-implanted* therewith and thereby.

THIS

THIS being thus firmly eſtabliſhed and proved, from the Immutable *Nature* of GOD, and the *Perfection* of His IMAGE, as *revealed* to us in *Holy Writ*; and that it is impoſſible the *Holy Scriptures* can, or do, *contradict* themſelves: Therefore, when we meet with any *Text* or *Paſſage*, in them, one or more, which at firſt Sight, ſeem to interfere with this eſtabliſhed *Divine Truth*, we ſhould compare *Text* with *Text*, *Scripture* with *Scripture*; which, when opened in us by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, Who dictated them, is by much the beſt *Interpreter* of *Scripture*; until we fairly Reconcile ſuch *Texts* and *Paſſages* with this certain and eſtabliſhed *Divine Truth*, and which is not ſo difficult to do, as ſome have imagined; and not preſently, or haſtily conclude, as too many do, that the *Holy Scripture* doth, or can, *Contradict* itſelf; which is to *Impeach* the HOLY GHOST of *Contradictions*; or, that an eſtabliſhed *Divine Truth* is *given up* in one Place of that *Divine Book*, which is *affirmed* and *fixed* in another. This were to make the *Divine Oracles* only as a *Noſe* of *Wax*, a *Heap* of *Contradictions*, a *Bone* of *Contention*, unworthy of GOD; by *wreſting* them, as St. *Peter* tells us, 2 *Epiſt.* iii. 16. the *unlearned*

learned and *unſtable do*, but *unto their own Deſtruction.*

I TAKE this *Reſtored and Re-implanted Freedom of Will*, with *Power* to make the *Right Uſe* of it, ro be what the *Schools* call, the *Gratia gratis data*, *the Grace of GOD freely given*; by which, as *Free Agents*, we are again made *capable* of *Chuſing* whether we *will Obey* the *Voice* of GOD, which is the original *Evangelical Covenant*, and *keep* His *Commandments*, which are not *grievous*, are not *inſnaring*, and which is not *impoſſible* to be done, in an acceptable Degree, and ſo be *ſaved*; or, by *Diſobedience*, by *wilful Rebellion*, to incur *Damnation.* For it is according to our *Choice*, founded in the *Freedom* of *Will*, thus *Reſtored* to us, that we become *rewardable* or *puniſhable* hereafter.

NEXT, As to PREDESTINATION, if we duely and rightly conſider the *Nature* of GOD, according to His *Revelation* of Himſelf, as neceſſarily the *ſame* from all *Eternity*, *now*, and *to* all *Eternity*, we ſhall find, that there can be no ſuch Thing, properly, as *firſt* or *ſecond* in Him; and conſequently, there can be no proper *Predeſtination.* But, if the Word *Predeſtination* be a Word *ad captum*, as it certainly is, and can be no other ſtrictly, juſt as GOD is

ſaid

ſaid to have *Eyes* and *Ears*, &c. in Compliance with our poor, weak, finite Underſtanding, and to give us an eaſier and better Conception of his *Omniſcience*, and other *Attributes*. If *Predeſtination* be underſtood in this Senſe, then, I do affirm it, that GOD has *Predeſtinated all Mankind* to be *ſaved*; For He WILLETH NOT the *Death, Deſtruction, or Damnation of any, but that* ALL *ſhould come to Repentance*. 2 St. *Pet.* iii. 9. Juſt ſo in St. *Matth.* xviii. 14. Where CHRIST is ſpeaking of *Children*, or *little Ones*, and ſhewing us that we muſt be like them, no doubt in an abſolute *Compliance* with the *Will* of their *Parents*, that is, in *Reſignation*, if we mean to be ſaved: He adds, *even ſo it is not the Will of your* Father *which is in Heaven, that one of theſe little Ones ſhould periſh*. Which ſhews that they may *periſh*, but that it is not the WILL of GOD that they ſhould; far leſs muſt any of them *neceſſarily periſh*, by the *Decree* of GOD. Therefore it is inconſiſtent with his moſt gracious *Declarations* of His *Love* and *Mercy* in CHRIST, to believe or ſay, that he WILLED the *Damnation* of *any*, more eſpecially, by an *Irreſiſtable Irrevocable Decree* from all *Eternity*.

AND He has likewiſe declared in *Ezek.* xviii. 32. That *He has no Pleaſure*

ſure in the Death of him that dieth. Now, if *He* had made the *Decree* of *Reprobation*, which the *Predeſtinarians* allege, He muſt then certainly have a *Pleaſure* in the *fulfilling* of His *own Decree*; which ſince He has expreſsly *declared againſt*; He therefore certainly never made any ſuch *Decree*.

BESIDES, St. *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Tim.* ii. 4. That GOD WILL *have ALL MEN to be ſaved, and to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth.* Now, from the bleſſed *Nature* of GOD, Who is LOVE, it is abſolutely impoſſible, that He can WILL *All Men*, or *Any Man*, to come to the *Knowledge* of the *Truth*, only, and on purpoſe, to *Damn* them the more effectually, according to the *Predeſtinarian Decree* of *Reprobation*. But the firſt Part of this *Text*, *GOD WILL have ALL MEN to be ſaved*, effectually *clears* GOD; and *juſtifies* Him from this Imputation of *Severity*, with which they accuſe Him. For, in order to the *Salvation* of *all Men*, which He WILLETH, He alſo *WILLETH ALL MEN to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, which is JESUS CHRIST, St. *John* xiv. 6. *JESUS ſaith unto him*, (Thomas) *I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.*

IF GOD had *Predeſtinated* any to *Damnation*, His WILL muſt *Accord* with, and be *Agreeable* to His *Decree*. Since then, He WILLETH NOT the *Damnation of any*; neirher has He *Predeſtinated any* to *Damnation*. For He WILLETH *ALL MEN to be ſaved*; but ſtill, as St. *Paul* informs us, 1 *Cor.* XV. 23. *Every Man in his own Order*, Some ſooner, ſome later, but all ſooner or later.

THEREFORE, None are to be *Condemned* or *Damned*, becauſe of an *Irreſiſtable Irrevocable Decree, Enacted* from *all Eternity*; but becauſe, that being now again made *Free Agents*, by having our *Loſt Freedom* of *Will Reſtored* to us, and in us, by the *Re-implanting* the IMAGE of GOD in our *Souls*, in an uſeful Degree, we *Chuſe Darkneſs* rather than *Light*, becauſe we *Do not* thoſe Things which we are not only *Required*, but alſo *Enabled* to do, by the *Re-implanting* the IMAGE of GOD in our *Souls*.

AND Thus our bleſſed LORD Himſelf has determined this Matter, St. *John* iii. 19. Saying, *And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds were evil.* They who *Love Darkneſs*, do certainly *Prefer* it to *Light*. This *Preference* is a *Choice*, and they accordingly *Chuſe* it, becauſe they

they *Love* and *Prefer* it. And this *Choice* is an *Act* of the *Will*, which being *wrong* and *wickedly applyed*; for this *Miſapplication* it is, that they who are *guilty* of it Incurr *Damnation*. This *Juſtifies GOD*, and his *Juſt* and *Merciful OEconomy* towards *fallen Man*, as it is our bounden *Duty* to do; and it ſhews, that it muſt be our *own Fault*, if we are *damned*, *Let God be true, and every Man a Liar, as it is written* (*Pſalm* li. 4.) *That Thou mighteſt be juſtified in Thy Sayings, and mighteſt Overcome when Thou art judged*, Rom. iii. 4. *O LORD, Righteouſneſs* belongeth *unto Thee, but unto us Confuſion of Faces*. Dan. ix. 7.

I THINK, What I have ſaid is ſufficient to *Eſtabliſh* the Doctrine of *Free Will*; and to *Overthrow* that of *Predeſtination*. Yet for the Sake of thoſe who are not *Miſled* by *Intereſt*, who are not *Malicious Predeſtinarians*, I ſhall add a few more improvable *Hints* to corroborate the true *Scripture Doctrine* of *Free Will*, againſt the *Damning Predeſtinarian Doctrine*; to *juſtify* the *Love* and *Mercy* of *GOD* in CHRIST.

FOR This End, if we duely conſider the indiſpenſibly neceſſary *Duty* of RESIGNATION, which is a capital *Article* of *Practical Chriſtianity*; we ſhall find, that this great *Duty* is abſolutely

Impracticable, if we are not endued with *Freedom* of *Will*. And therefore, it is barbarous and ſtupid *Blaſphemy* to imagine, that the *Juſt* GOD of *Love* and *Mercy*, can *Require Reſignation* of us, unleſs He had firſt endued us with *Freedom* of *Will*. For we cannot, in any tolerable Propriety, be ſaid to *Reſign*, what is not our *Right*, or what is not in our *Poſſeſſion*, or *Power* to *Reſign*. Far leſs is it decent to believe, that GOD would *Require* us, upon the *Peril* of *Damnation* to *Reſign* what he has put entirely *out* of our *Power* to *do*. For, *Reſignation* of our *Will* to *GOD*, ſuppoſeth, and indeed ſhews clearly, that GOD has endued us with a *Will*, and with *Power* to *Reſign* it, or *Not*, as we pleaſe, yet at our *Peril*. And without *Reſignation* of our *Will* to GOD, in ſome acceptable Degree, we cannot properly be called *true Chriſtians*. That which appears to be the great Reaſon why *GOD* has moſt graciouſly been pleaſed to Endue us with this *Freedom* of *Will*, is, That as *Rational Creatures*, as *Free Agents*, we may *voluntarily*, *freely*, and by *Choice*, *Reſign* this *Freedom* of *Will* to Him, and to Him alone, who endued us with it, as our own proper *Fact*, and *Deed*; that ſo, our *Reſignation* of it, may become *Rewardable*; as the not *Reſigning* it is *Puniſhable*.

niſhable. Thy WILL be done in *Earth*, as it is in *Heaven*. It is therefore both *Folly* and *Sin*, not to *Reſign* our *Will* to *GOD*; and it is alſo both *Folly* and *Sin* to *Reſign* it to any other.

IF Any *Novice* in *Chriſtianity* ſhall aſk, how comes *Reſignation* to be ſo great and neceſſary a *Duty*? Let ſuch conſider the great *Reſignation* of our Bleſſed LORD, our Great *Examplar*, recorded in the *Goſpels*; Let them conſider the *Nature* of the *Thing*, the *Terms* of the *Covenant*, the Neceſſity of *Obedience* to the *Voice* and *Commands* of *GOD*, the *Depravity* of our *Will* by Nature; with the Infinite and Abſolute *Perfection* of the *WILL* of *GOD*; What theſe lead them into, and what the *Holy Scripture* contains concerning them; and let them read ſuch Practical Books, as the admirable *Thomas a Kempis* in his own primitive ſimple Stile, and the famous Dr. *Worthington* upon this Subject, and then I doubt not but they will be fully ſatisfied of the *Conveniency*, and *abſolute Neceſſity*, of *Reſignation*.

BUT Farther, we owe the *Re-implanting* the IMAGE of GOD in our *Souls*, to the *Love* and *Mercy* of GOD, in and through JESUS CHRIST, and to the *Purchaſs*, *Merits*, and *Satisfaction* of *CHRIST*; Therefore it is highly *Derogatory*

rogatory to the *Divine Love* and *Mercy*; to the *Purchaſs*, *Merites*, and *Satisfaction* of CHRIST; and very *unautiful* and *ungrateful* alſo, to *deny* that we are *Endued* with *Freedom* of *Will*. For, by denying that we are *Free Agents*, we affirm, that either GOD has not *Re-implanted* and *Reſtored* His own IMAGE in us, or if He has, that it is only an *imperfect*, *deficient*, or *defective IMAGE* of Himſelf, which He has *Re-implanted* in us. And the IMAGE of GOD muſt be *Perfect*, becauſe He is *Perfect*; for He could not be GOD, were there any *Imperfection* in Him, or were He *capable* of any, and therefore His IMAGE muſt be *Perfect* alſo. And yet thus *Imperfect* it muſt be, if in the *Re-implanted Divine IMAGE* however ſmall, there are not *all* the *Attributes* of GOD, though but in *Miniature*. The ſmalleſt *Spark* of *Light*, which flows from our *Cæleſtial Sun*, is as truly *Light*, in its due Proportion, as is the whole *Body* of the *Sun*. GOD is *Light*, and therefore His *IMAGE* muſt be *Light* alſo. And our *Re-implanted Divine Light* is the Eternal WORD of GOD, which conſtitutes the ſupreme *Beatitude* in GOD Himſelf. And this our *Divine Light* is now *Planted* in the *Center* or *Heart* of our *Soul*, as the *IMAGE* of its Inexhauſtible *Original*, from which it *flows*. The

Learned

Learned have obſerved a *Type* of this in *outward Nature*, in the *Bononian Stone*, which attracts to itſelf, and retains in itſelf, the *Rays* of the *Sun*, that if you put it in a dark Place, after it is thus impregnated with theſe *Rays*, it will *ſhine* clearly, and ſend forth Plenty of *Light*. But be this as it will.

I HAVE Already proved, that *Freedom* of *Will* is an *Eſſential Atribute* of GOD; and by the ſame *Rule* and *Reaſoning* that the *Predeſtinarians deprive* us of this *Atribute*, we may alſo be *deprived* of all the reſt of GOD's *Atributes*. And this brings what is acknowledged, in Words, to be the *IMAGE* of GOD, to be indeed no *IMAGE* of Him at all, as being *devoid* of all theſe *Divine Atributes*, which are *Eſſential* to GOD and it, and which is ſo far from making us become *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, according to 2 St. *Peter* i. 4. that it *Reduces* us to rather a *worſe Condition*, than what *Adam* was in, by his *Sin* and *Fall*, before the *Divine IMAGE* was *Re-implanted* in him; and this, after all the Pains that JESUS CHRIST has been at for our *Salvation*. This is *Levelling* and *Depreſſing* of us down to what is near of Kin to that of *Bruit Beaſts*, and putting us in a worſe Condition than they are in.

THERE-

THEREFORE, This *Predestinarian Doctrine*, in itself, is a manifest *Contradiction* to the Blessed *NATURE* of *GOD*, who is *LOVE* and *MERCY*. It gives the *Lie* to what *GOD* has most graciously been pleased to *declare* in *Holy Writ*. It *debars* a *Soul* from the *Original Improveable Perfection* of its *Nature*, in the *Design* of *GOD*; it makes *GOD* not *Able*, or, not *Willing*, to extend His *Love* and *Mercy*, over *All* His *Works*, contrary to both His *Nature*, His *Declaration*, and His *Promise*. It *Belies* the *Nature* of *CHRIST*, as *Man*, who Himself said, St. *John* x. 18. That He had *Power to lay down His Life, and Power to take it again*. Which evidently shews, that He was endued with *Freedom* of *Will*, that He was a *Free Agent*, even as *Man*. And most certainly He made the right Use of it; for He *Resigned His Will* to the *FATHER*, in the most momentuous Case that could possibly befal Him. As appears from St. *Math.* xxvi. 39, 42. which yet He could not do, if He had not a *Free Will*. *And yet He was in all Things made like unto His Brethren*, the Children of *Adam*, and the *Seed* of *Abraham*. *Heb.* ii. 17. Which is a full Proof of our being so *Endued*; and that we ought so to *Resign* our *Will* to *GOD*,

as

as He our great *Examplar* Was, and Did. And alſo to deny that we are thus endued, is unduely and unlawfully to *contract* and *curtail* the true *Extent* of *CHRIST*'s *Purchaſe*, *Merits*, and *Satisfaction* by the Grand *Attonement*, which is by this Means, greatly *depreciated*, and that moſt *unjuſtly* and *ungratefully*. It makes Him as *MESSIAH*, as the *Mediator* between *GOD* and *Man*, either *not able*, or not *willing* to *do*, what *He* has *undertaken* to do, and for which *He Died*.

AND Therefore, all theſe *Things*, theſe neceſſary *Conſequences* of this *Opinion*, being duely conſidered, and impartially weighed, are ſufficient to make all true *Chriſtians* Abhor and Renounce this terrible *Doctrine*. And ſtill the rather, becauſe St. *Paul*, who is erroneouſly looked upon by the *Predeſtinarians* as the great *Patron* of their *Doctrine*, has plainly *determined* againſt them. 1 *Cor.* vii. 37. Where he aſſerts, that *a Man has POWER over his own WILL*, which it is impoſſible he can have, in any Inſtance, unleſs he be endued with *Freedom* of *Will*, and be a *Free Agent*.

BUT Farther, Let any impartial unprejudiced Perſon conſider, what is certainly true in *Fact*, however little it be

generally minded, that the *Doctrine* of *Predestination*, *dresses* up the Great and Almighty *GOD* of *Love* and *Mercy*, so to speak, in the *Cloathes* of the *Devil*, by making Him, contrary to His *NATURE*, most *Cruel*, *Tyrannical*, and *Despotick*: Thus *Robbing* Him, as far as they are able, (though I hope unwarily) of His *Essential Atributes* of JUSTICE, MERCY and LOVE.

FIRST, *They Rob* Him of His *JUSTICE*, by making Him *decree Irrevocably*. and *Irreversibly*, from all *Eternity*, to *Damn* the far greater Part of *Mankind*, for whom *CHRIST died*; for *not doing* what Himself has *Preordained* they shall never have in their *Power* to *do*. shall never be capable of *doing*, nor *do*.

SECONDLY, *They Rob* Him of His *tender MERCY*, which He has solemnly *declared* is *over all His Works*. Psal. cxlv. 9. And which is *Everlasting*, Ps. c. 5. And in which *He delights*, Micah vii. 18. And which St. *James* tells us ii. 13. *Rejoyceth against Judgment*. Yet nevertheless they *Rob* Him of this beloved *Attribute*, not only by *Confining* His *Mercy* to a very few, even in the *Design* of *GOD*,

GOD, which makes it *Partial*, and not as it truly is, *Infinite*, according to His own Bleſſed *NATURE*, and His moſt ſolemn repeated *Declarations*; But alſo they make Him the very *Reverſe* of *Mercy*, even *Cruel*, *Tyrannical*, and *Deſpotick*, by their *Reprobating Irreverſible Decree*; each of which *Characters* is Diametrically *Oppoſite* to His *Infinite JUSTICE*, *MERCY*, and *LOVE*.

AND *Thirdly*, They *Rob* Him of His *LOVE*; by making Him *Hate*, *Abhor*, and *Abominate* an infinite Number of poor *Mortals*, from all *Eternity*, before they *Exiſted* in the World; and then they make Him *Irrevocably Predetermined*, *Sempeternally* to *Damn* them; without ever putting it in their *Power* poſſibly to *Avoid* this *Damnation*. And, as if He delighted in *Cruelty*, and *Arbitrary Oppreſſion*, to *Tantalize* theſe miſerable *Pre-condemned Wretches*, with *Promiſes* of *Salvation*, provided they *Will do*, what by an *Irrevocable*, *Irreſiſtable Decree*, He has *fore-ordained* ſhall never be in their *Power* to *do*.

AND What is all this, but wickedly to aſſign the *Black Characters* and *Qualities* of a *Devil*, as *Atributes* to the

 infinitely

infinitely *Juſt* and *Merciful* GOD of *Love*. Thus *Robbing* Him, as far as they may, of *ſeveral*, if not of *All* His *Eſſential*, *Genuine*, *Divine Atributes*; and repreſenting Him as a *Cruel*, *Tyrannical*, *Deſpotick*, *Unmerciful Being*, without *Love*, without *Compaſſion*, but to a very few, to whom He is *Partial*. What a *monſtrous*, *blaſphemous Idea* this gives of GOD; and how *inconſiſtent* with *Chriſtianity*, and with *Truth*, any Impartial Perſon may ſee with half an Eye! Nay, the wiſer *Heathens* had a much *truer* and more *juſt* Notion of Him.

THEREFORE, It highly imports the *Predeſtinarians* moſt ſeriouſly to conſider whither this *Doctrine* leads them; And whether they are not thereby led, indeed, to *Deny* the *true GOD*, Since although they confeſs Him in, and by *Words*, yet by *denyiug His Eſſential Attributes*, and by *Repreſenting Him* the very *Reverſe* of what He truly *is*, and has *declared* Himſelf to *be*, they do in very Deed *deny Him*. And by *Applying* to Him ſuch *wicked Qualities*, as properly belong to a *Devil*; Whether their GOD whom they *worſhip* be indeed the *true GOD*, or an *Imaginary GOD*, of their own *Forming*, Which is direct *Idolatry*,

dolatry, and which the true *GOD* abhors.

NOR Will it be eaſy for them to Reconcile *CHRIST*'s *Dying* for *All Men*. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. compared with 2 *Tim.* ii. 6. *Who gave Himſelf a Ranſom for ALL, to be teſtified in due Time.* And with vi. 10. *GOD --- is the Saviour of ALL MEN, eſpecially of thoſe that believe.* And with *Heb.* ii. 9. Where St. *Paul* ſaith, That *CHRIST taſted Death for EVERY MAN.* And with 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. *For as in* Adam *ALL Die; even ſo in CHRIST ſhall ALL be made Alive.* It will not be eaſy, I ſay, for the *Predeſtinarians* to Reconcile theſe *Texts* with their *Decree* of *Reprobation*, and *ſempiternal Damnation*, Irrevocably *Fixed* from All *Eternity*. Nor with *Ezek.* xviii. 31, 32. *CAST AWAY from you all your Tranſgreſſions, wherely ye have tranſgreſſed, and MAKE YOU A NEW HEART; AND A NEW SPIRIT; For WHY WILL YE DIE; O Houſe of* Iſrael? 32. *For I HAVE NO PLEASURE in the DEATH of Him that Dieth, ſaith the LORD GOD: Wherefore TURN* your ſelves, *and Live ye:* Nor with 2 *Tim.* ii. 20, 21, 26. Where St. *Paul*, ſpeaks of A Man's PURGING HIMSELF --- and RE-

COVER-

COVERING HIMSELF *out of the Snare of the Devil.* These *Texts* do not Look Like *Decreeing Damnation* to the far greater Part of *Mankind*; from All *Eternity*, *Irrevocably*, without putting it in their *Power* to be *Saved*: No, But rather Like *Expostulating* in Great *Mercy* and *Love* with *Free Agents*, that they may not *Undo themselves* by a wrong Application of their *Free Will*. Since GOD has put it in their *Power*, to *cast away all their Transgressions*: *To prevent Dying*, (the *Second Death*, which is, *Damnation*:) To *Turn*: To *Purge*; and *Recover themselves*, &c. This being most *Agreeable* to His Blessed *NATURE*; to His *WILL*, to His *MERCY*, to His *LOVE*; And most *Acceptable* to Him. None of which it can be, if the *Predestinarian Doctrine* be true, or, If *Man* is not now again a *Free Agent*.

IT Is A Terrible Thing to *Rob* GOD of His *Essential Divine Attributes*, by the Sophistical Nicety of School *Distinctions*. And it is neither *Just* nor *Civil*, to GOD nor *Man*, to make *Infinite Numbers* of our *Fellow-Creatures*, to be the *Objects* of GOD's *Wrath*, from All *Eternity*, by an *Irrevocable Irresistable Decree*; And to *Damn* them *Sempeternally* without a *Possibility* of *Escaping*: The *Incarnation*

nation, Death, Purchaſs, Merites, Satisfaction and *Intercession* of JESUS CHRIST Notwithſtanding. Indeed he has but Little Reaſon to expect to be *ſaved* by the *Merites* of CHRIST, who by Principle thus *Depreciates* Them.

IT Were eaſy to Enforce what I have here Advanced with many more Arguments, but All I deſign is to Hint at Things; To bring the *Controverſy* into a ſmall and narrow Compaſs, and to leave the farther Proſecution to the Cooler Thoughts of the *Predeſtinarians* themſelves, who are Led into that *Doctrine* by *Education*, or for Want of due *Inquiry*, who are *well Diſpoſed*; and hold it *bona Fide*, with an honeſt, though miſtaken *Sincerity*, which I am well ſatisfyed many Do. And although the *Doctrine*, it itſelf be moſt Abominable, yet I hope, and Pray GOD, that He may ſanctify even their *Error* unto them, and make *Merciful Allowances* for their *Unvoluntary Miſtake*, who have ſucked it in with their Mother's Milk, and have not had *Opportunity*, *Perſpicuity* of *Judgment*, or *Reſolution* enough to throw it off afterward, I take their Caſe to be this; That GOD's *Atributes* of OMNISCIENCE and OMNIPOTENCY

with

with a wrong Notion of His PRESCIENCE, have at first struck them so strongly, that it is not easy for them afterward to Conceive aright of the *Divine Temperature* and *Harmony* of these and GOD's other *Essential Atributes*, Especially when his *LOVE* and *MERCY*, seem to Claim An *Abatement* of that *Infinite, Independent, POWER*, and strict *JUSTICE*, which they had placed at the Head of All His *Atributes*, out of *Harmony*. This is the *wrong Light* with which, I Charitably think, some are *Misled*; And for whose Sakes, principally, I have written this Paper. And I recommend it to these duely to Consider what I have said, with Impartiality. And also to Consider that the Word *PRESCIENCE* is Likewise a Word *Ad Captum*; For GOD certainly *Seeth* All Things, Which, as to us, are *Past, Present*, and *To Come, Uno Intuitu, In One View*, which we, being *Finite*, Cannot Conceive but with Relation to *Time*, as *Past, Present*, and *Future*: And Further, What the *Schools* call *Scientia Media*, or *Middle Science*, of which we have at least four Instances in *Holy Writ*, shews, That GOD may *Foresee* both what *May*, *Shall*, and what *Is not* to Come to Pass. Witness *David* in *Keilah*,

lah, and St. *Paul* when going to be *Ship-wrecked*.

BUT There are others who maintain this *Predeſtinarian Doctrine*, becauſe it is their *Worldly Intereſt* ſo to do; for it helps to make the *Pot Boil*; Such as theſe I heartily and ſincerely *Wiſh*, but can ſcarcely *Hope*, to *Recover*; for they *Worſhip Mammon*, their GOD is their *Belly*, their *Glory* is their *Shame*, and they *Mind Earthly Things*. Phil. iii. 18, 19.

THUS Sir, I think, I have Fully and Undeniably proved *Man* to be now again, A *Free-Agent*, And I have Charged the Doctrine of *Predeſtination* home upon the *Conſciences* of the *Maintainers* of it, from Undeniable *Principles*, plainly held forth to us in *Holy Writ* Unperverted. And I humbly Pray the Infinitely *Juſt GOD* of *Love* and *Mercy*, to *Open* their *Eyes*, to *Pardon* their *Sins*, to *illuminate* their *Souls*, and to *Guide* them, by His *HOLY SPIRIT*, into *All Truth*; For the Sake of the Beloved *SON* of His *LOVE*, *JESUS CHRIST*, our Bleſſed *LORD*, *Saviour*, and *Redeemer*. Amen.

WHY

WHY Is This *Wrangling World* thus *Torn*;
FREE-GRACE, FREE-WILL, are both together *Born*.
IF GOD's *Free-Grace* Rule In, and Over *Me*,
HIS WILL is *Mine*, and So my *Will* is *Free*.

I Am, *Sir*,

Your Most humble Servant,

October 14, 1727.

A. (B.) C.

FINIS.